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### The Art of French Melodie: A Manual for Recital Preparation

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J.N. Andrews Honors Program  
Andrews University

HONS 497  
Honors Thesis

The Art of French *Mélodie*: A Manual for Recital Preparation

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24 September 2015

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Primary Advisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Department of Music

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**Abstract**

This is a documentation of my journey through the research, development and execution of a voice recital, with a focus on the creation of guidelines for how one may achieve success in a future recital. Moving through three phases: Thinking, Doing and Reflecting, I highlight the important processes required to transition seamlessly through the phases. During the entirety of this project, I kept a journal of each step, documenting everything to maintain the integrity of the process, and organizing the information into sections to make the findings easier to understand, learn and replicate. My end goal is to produce a comprehensive “how to” manual that guides the reader through planning, preparing, and presenting a recital to the public.

## **Introduction**

While preparing for my recital in my senior year of college I realized that I was unaware of the process required to put on one. Seeking guidance from my teacher I was informed of the tremendous amount of preparation it takes to produce such a performance. This has occurred to countless other music students as well. Though we are to present our skills at the end of our years, there is no concise manual addressing the objective as it relates specifically to Andrews University. Due to this lack of guidance material I decided to document my recital preparation process to be useful as a guide to those preparing for their recitals in the future. The purpose of this research project is to present a guidebook for students at the university to use, not only for academic recitals, but for performances beyond the school setting.

Although there are resources on recital preparation for performers/performances outside of the academic setting there are no outlines of the recital preparation process as it relates to music students. Providing a perspective on the student performer who balances both academic requirements and performance demands encapsulates this experience. This thesis (guidebook) will contain my own experiences, as well as cite experiences from other student performers. These personal experiences listed in this book are a crucial tool for up-and-coming academic performers.

## **Research Question**

The primary question that this guidebook addresses is this: Is it possible for a student to present a clear and well planned recital while satisfying their other academic requirements? My short answer is yes. My process, and the steps I take, shows that it is possible. This project stands as an organized reference for fellow students to use as well. Though every recital will be unique, the concepts in this guidebook have proven effective in my performance and will be to others. My methodology gives details on how this was achieved.

## **Format of Manual**

Before jumping into the manual itself, it is important to lay out the format. It may include the following (as applicable) for a better understanding of the process:

1. My experiences – Includes my actions, experiences, results
2. Experiences of others – Includes the actions, experiences, results of other voice majors
3. Other alternatives – Includes instructions from other sources
4. Tips – Main points of emphasis

This guidebook is created with the intention of assisting academic (and nonacademic) performers in their quest to present their talents to audiences in a recital. Please note that this is based on personal experiences of myself and other colleagues as well as further academic research but will not encompass every scenario that may arise in your preparation. Please use wisely.



## Methodology

### Three Phases of Research

#### *Thinking – The Starting Line*

A recital is a performance where a student displays the work they have done for their instrument. Preparing for the recital requires you to think ahead. The Department of Music's Student Handbook suggests that students should begin preparation at least "one year in advance."<sup>1</sup> This allows for an adequate amount of time to think about what they want for their recital. In my own preparation I began thinking about what I wanted to offer for my recital in Fall 2014. Thorough time in preparation for this event is important, especially because of what it entails. Starting to think about the recital the semester before did prove to be a challenge because of the amount of music I had to learn. Although I could have started the process earlier, the amount of time I gave myself to plan proved enough for me. I also had a bit of help from my educational requirements. The J. N. Andrews Honors program's thesis requirement forced me to start early and challenged me to know what was required of me.

A different way to start the process is to begin to plan out your program from the time you learn about there being a recital at the end of your years. Plan your music in such a way that would provide you with the ease of having songs you have worked on for a while. Keep in mind that planning in advance does not rule out revising plans as your studies progress. As I was doing some songs I had learned my sophomore year, old understanding had to be unlearned because I had grown in my vocal technique.

This goes hand in hand with working with your teacher to choose pieces. It is important to maintain a connection between student and teacher so to ensure that a beneficial relationship for both emerges. The teacher can start from the beginning to help you with songs that can make for a

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<sup>1</sup> Andrews University, *Music Student Handbook* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Music Department, 2013)

good recital. Songs that are challenging and likeable are those which would motivate the student to keep up on their practice. A teacher also knows what works and doesn't work with your voice. A good student – teacher relationship will leave a student feeling confident and prepared for their recital. Do not expect to always hold the same opinions as your teacher, however. While I feel that recital preparation should be a goal from freshman year my teacher believes that is too early. He suggests planning about two years in advance, allowing technical progress to be the exclusive goal in the first two years of an undergraduate degree, while pointing out that most students do utilize music from their four years of study when forming their final recital. In my case, I decided to use my recital as a vehicle for researching my honors thesis, and the initial theme I settled on required me to craft a new recital primarily from scratch.

It is very important to know what is required of you. Depending on what degree you are working toward there are different requirements you should be aware of. At Andrews University, those working toward a Bachelor of Arts in Music are only required to do a thirty minute recital, while those doing a Bachelor of Music must prepare a thirty minute Junior Recital and sixty minute Senior Recital. These times are the length of the set of music being done, not the actual length of the entire program. This will be spoken about in more detail later in the doing process.

When students opt to begin learning early, they set themselves up to present a great recital. While it is hopeful they could choose music they like, teachers may choose instead to encourage them to do more challenging pieces that they may or may not like. Notably, these students are better able to develop a good practice ethic, regardless of challenge or indifference about a piece because of prioritization.

It is also important to get the music to your accompanist as soon as possible. This allows them to have ample time to learn the music. In addition to giving the majority of my music to my

accompanist the semester prior to the recital, we spoke as soon as possible about schedules in order to sync practice times. Communication will be a beneficial factor in working with an accompanist.

### **Tips:**

- Start planning for your recital as soon as is possible.
- Know what the requirements for your degree are.
- Work alongside your teacher and trust their guidance. They have more experience than you and may be able to give you guidance in ways that you may not have thought of.
- Always find out your accompanist's schedule. In signing up for anything, keep their availability in mind. You don't want to create a conflict with the person you should be keeping a cordial relationship with. It will not make the process of learning the music any easier.

### **Themes**

I decided on my recital of French *mélodie* with my teacher. It was chosen in an attempt to make my honors research project easier. Having an idea as to why you choose a song in order to create a great connecting theme provides a high level of cohesiveness. Cohesiveness is important to create a full experience for the audience. Themes in certain recitals are given a unified point just by the selection of the songs. When an artist chooses to develop the theme through program order and musical cohesion, a deeper understanding of the music is shown and a more fulfilling experience takes place.

My choice of theme only highlights one portion of the types of themes possible and how they can come about. I will highlight two: emotion or idea and time period. I chose the latter in order to dive deeply into time period of music that interested me and that would make a good cohesive research area. My recital was highly nontraditional in nature because of its specific focus, but an exception was made based on my previous musical work. I had prepared and performed



music from other genres and languages during my studies, so my teacher allowed the development of a narrow focus to support the initial objective of the honors thesis. My fellow voice students had different reasons for choosing the former. Kayla looked at the songs she had already learned and discovered a certain theme of unrequited love in several. From there, she filled in a few holes with new songs and ruled out previous songs that did not fit the established theme. Another classmate, Afia, had prepared numerous arias from operas, musical theater and oratorio during her studies. Using these songs as her focus, she formed a dramatic recital journeying through various emotions. These examples show how choosing a theme in either way can be a creatively rewarding experience.

**Tips:**

- Discover the theme within your songs. Finding the connection in the music could push your recital to great heights.
- Control the flow of the program by forming a continuously moving story.
- Provide a complete musical experience for both you and the audience.



### ***Doing – The Longest Path***

This next section is the part where the majority of the work happens. You have already decided on the type of recital you wish to create and picked songs. Now it is time to get to work.

In this portion there are many things that overlap which can make it a tricky process. The important thing to know is that the doing process does not stop until you have completed your recital. You can begin most sections at various times in the process and many will have to be revisited during the course of preparation.

### **Learning**

The learning portion of the recital process is where the foundation of the work occurs. It involves many things. At the bare minimum one must translate the text into their native tongue, construct a literal translation for difficult poetic phrases, create an IPA pronunciation translation, increase fluency in speaking the text as a poem, AND learn the notes and rhythms of the music. During this time I chose to listen to other persons who performed the songs I wanted to learn. This allowed me to learn at a quicker pace because I was able to pick up on the notes quickly. I listened to more than one recording of the same song in order to form various ideas on how I could phrase the music and increase overall musical clarity.

Listening to recordings is important to do, but it can harm your practice if it is not done correctly. When searching for recordings, listen for proper pronunciation of the text. If you are singing in a language that is different from your native language, it will be important to focus on getting the pronunciation right. Pronunciation can enhance or distract from a song so it is important to learn it right the first time. I struggled with this greatly because I had not sung in French for some time, though I possessed an understanding of the language. This proved to be a stressful time for me because my teacher insisted that it is better to learn it correctly the first time rather than to unlearn it. This stuck with me as I continued to learn the rest of my music.

There is no one way to begin to learn the material. Vocal students may find that starting with the text allows them to begin the process of understanding the songs earlier in the learning portion. That could prove to be very useful for some. I found that the best way for me to learn was through focus on the music (notes and rhythms) first. Once I was able to sing the tune the words came easy for me. This is not always the case. One student stated that he used to focus on the music then would work on the lyrics. Now his preferred method is to “go through text, then rhythm and then the notes.” Tweaking personal preference into practice is what makes learning music more enjoyable.

### **Tips:**

- Once you have learned your words, rhythms and pitches, listen to recordings of the songs you plan to sing. It will help you learn the music faster.
- Listening to multiple recordings and making yourself aware of their mistakes will allow you to avoid them. It also allows you to build a mental database or palate of the range of interpretations at your disposal.
- Make sure the recordings you listen to are accurate to the pronunciation of the text.
- Tackle specific portions of the music when starting and put the parts together at a later time.
- Find a method of learning that works well for you.

### **Determining**

The determining portion is the section where the lyrics of the music are dissected to be better expressed and understood by you and the audience. This begins while in the learning portion and should extend beyond the duration of it as well.

It is not completely necessary to learn the language you are singing in but it is important to know what it means. Coupled hand in hand with pronunciation, understanding the meaning of the text provides a richer experience for the audience. It shows through your portrayal of the music and gives the audience the belief that you understand the language. Listening to multiple recordings

helps here once again. My teacher reminded me that I should not only listen to one recording, but should listen to multiple in order to hear different ways of expressing the music. Note that listening to recordings should not overshadow personal connection and ideas on how to phrase the music, yet a wise artist will not ignore the history of great artists who have come before. Also note that immersing oneself in the historical performance recording of a piece is not as valuable when the music is not well-established. If you choose to premiere a new composition it becomes important for you to use a recording device, regularly documenting your growth with the piece and creating your own set of musical options by listening to yourself as the artist.

While understanding the language helps you understand what words mean, understanding complete word-by-word and line-by-line meanings of the text allows for better expression of the song. Part of understanding the language is dissecting the story the text aims to express. Most of my repertoire for the recital had poems as lyrics. This meant for me that I had to understand the meaning of the poem in order to express it well. Unlike songs which told exactly what was meant, with these songs I had to do a deeper search. I used three book sources to translate the poems into stories and scenes I could understand.

A good idea for understanding the text would be what my classmate told me. "Find a translation of the song and write it side by side with the original text." I went a little deeper, found three different translations and worked through them, going line by line, until I found the interpretation I thought best expressed what I wanted the audience to understand. What I ended up with was more an interpretation rather than a direct translation. That is okay. As long as the audience understands what you want them to understand, you have done what you set out to do. Further, any translation, even a word-for-word translation, is actually an interpretation. Functionally, the word-by-word translation insures that you know specifically what a single word means, while the line-by-line translation aids in comprehension of meaning.



**Tips:**

- Understand what the text means. It will help your audience better connect to the music.
- Find an interpretation of the song which would best help you understand the meaning.
- Learn to pronounce the text as poetry.
- Be precise in learning correct pronunciation.
- Begin with a true word-for-word translation and use the most important words to project the meaning you want to transmit.
- Listen to recordings of multiple artists to better help flesh out the story of the music.

**Combining and Integrating**

This is the portion where the music and the text are fully combined. This involves a deeper connection of music and text. Having developed a good understanding of the text, attention should be turned to understanding what the composer was attempting to say with the music. Choose to work with the composer, or in some cases, follow your personal interpretations of the poem. This requires more than a basic understanding of the text. This requires an in depth understanding of what the lyrics mean. This was the most challenging part of the process and it is not to be taken lightly. Your connection to the text will determine the way you present it to others, how it is received, and if it is deemed authentic. This part has to be consistently renewed throughout the process. It is not simply to choose a motion and repeat it constantly but instead to renew and relive the experience of the song in every performance. In *The Performer Prepares* by Robert Caldwell he speaks of a colleague of his whom after clearing up technicalities creates an image of the performance of a work, continuously filling out the image to the point where she can all but touch it. It is at that point where the music is ready to be performed. This works for the student musician as well. Though plagued with limited time, it is very possible to develop a great picture. Think about

the meaning of the music during everyday activity, including walking to class, eating, bike riding, anywhere will allow you to better carve out the picture you wish to see.

It is important to spend quality time on individual songs to flesh them out how you want them to be. By carving out different ideas for specific lines in the songs I was able to add technical work to the music to make it seem effortless. I did this painstakingly with *La vie antérieure* by deciding where I was going to break up the text on purpose to give myself space to breathe. I also thought about what emotions I wanted to show line by line. For example, in “*Les boules, en roulant les images des cioux,*” I thought of a low rumbling in my voice that would push the song forward and decided to change that darkness to something lighter by the time I got to *cioux*. I wanted to give the illusion of clarity in sound. In creating this image in my practice I had constructed an idea more concrete to present to my audience at the recital. All of this work challenges you to think less about your singing technique and more on communication and artistry.

By the time I began this part it was already a week before the recital. I began it late because of having to learn nine songs in their entirety. What made it easier for me is that I had performed many of them before the recital happened. This allowed me to have the entire song in my head before having to sit and create ideas for the songs. The listening to other artists also helped me create ideas for the music quickly and efficiently.

### **Tips:**

- Consistently work with the music and text to flesh out a visual idea. This will help the audience have an experience.
- Take time every day to work on your visual ideas for the music.
- Set the scene in your mind. Although the audience cannot see it, they can tell when you do.
- Renew the experience every performance.

## Recital Audition

At Andrews University, this half of the doing portion is as important as the first portion. Without this technical portion you cannot put on your recital. The recital audition is the part where all your hard work pays off, and where you present the music you have been working on to the professors. At this point you are not completely ready. The teachers just want to see that you are well on your way to being prepared for the recital. The first thing to do is to decide approximately when you want to offer your recital. Working backward one month from that date gives you the deadline you have for passing your recital audition. When you are ready to audition, the professors will work to find a time for the audition. Next it is important to go to the office and get your audition form from the office director. You will need to keep in contact with your teacher at this point to find a time that would be appropriate for you both and the other faculty members who will be there.

There are two parts to the recital audition form. The first part goes to your teacher and the second part is for the Howard Performing Arts Center. Make sure to take it there personally because failure to do so would prohibit you from being able to practice there and have your recital. The office will not take it for you.

On the day of the audition, dress well. It does not have to be what you will wear for the recital itself, but business/church attire is recommended. This is your time to perform as if it is the recital.

My pronunciation and expression of the language proved helpful when I was doing my recital audition. I messed up the lyrics multiple times and even had one time where I had to tell them that I could not continue because I could not remember. Though I was fearful that I would be rejected because of that, I had two things I held on to: My teacher's trust in my capabilities and my constant stage presence regardless of issues that arose.



**Tips:**

- Make sure to talk with your teacher about possible audition times.
- Be prepared to do your best.
- Do not be worried if you mess up. Keep on going through the song confidently. The teachers are more interested in your overall artistry.

**Paperwork**

Paperwork is still important at this stage in the process. There were still things I needed to fix. I needed to do work on some of my pieces. One prominent example of that was in working on my Edith Piaf song "*Non je ne regrette rien.*" When I purchased the song I did not pay much attention to the key. What I ended up with was way too low for me to sing. I spent time changing the key on Finale and practiced it that way for two and ½ months yet found it to be uncomfortable for me. Finally, I decided to change it just a couple of days before the recital. What I ended up with was comfortable and easier to sing.

The next big part of the paperwork involves the creation of the text translations and interpretations for the bulletin. A portion of this was already completed before this occurred but this section was instead focused on the audience and what I wanted them to experience. I tailored my interpretations for their understanding. This would allow them to have a better experience with the music. The most trouble I experienced came from working with the Edith Piaf text. Her songs were not composed from poems like the other ten songs were so the words did not flow as smoothly. I was tempted to omit the translations of her songs and instead write a few lines to explain what they were about. In the end I decided that it was simpler to write the translations and allow the audience to grasp their own meaning.

I wrote my biography to highlight the accomplishments I had made at that point in time. It listed my teachers, things that I took part in and other major accomplishments. This is a good

resource to have as a musician. In order to write my bio I looked at the bios of more accomplished artists. The important thing is to look at the structure as well as the tense of the writing. That would help give a clear understanding of how industry standards are in terms of writing bios.

Another major part of the recital process is the public relations (PR) portion. It is important because without spreading the word around, no one will come to the recital or know about it. Public Relations can take many forms. A classic way that the music program does it is that they usually put up posters for events that are happening around campus. I decided that it would be easiest to follow this method. I got in contact with a photographer who I knew personally and was able to take photos and create the poster for me. In working with the photographer I had to create a visual mood board to gather my ideas for the poster. From there they were able to create a poster that I felt accurately represented what I wanted for the recital.

I went to main buildings where the majority of students pass through to put up posters. This works in places with the most amount of traffic because as people look around they will see the events happening on campus. Not only did I have posters around but I let people know via two social media outlets: Facebook and Instagram. Make sure that you reach through as many avenues as possible. The posts let people know more about the recital, where it was being held and the time it would be. The Music Department also created a Facebook recital page for me. This allowed me to reach others who were not personal friends with me on Facebook.

Students can get their posters printed at Lithotech. The Music Department has a deal which allows you to print 50 posters for around \$30. It is up to you if this is worth the investment. I chose instead to buy 25 posters although I did not get the discount because I decided that I did not want that many posters.

Important to note is that time plays a crucial factor in what is possible to do for PR. If it is the last thing thought about it can limit the chances of people coming. Also lost time does not



always give way to proper time to execute good PR ideas. One colleague mentioned that she had some ideas for letting people know about recital but time got in the way instead she chose another creative way to let people know. "I print[ed] small [card-stock flyers] and handed them to my friends as reminders. It ...made them feel like individualized invitations so most of the people who got one came." Though posting on social media sites are good ways to tell a lot of people individualized invitations can make all the difference.

### **Tips:**

- Be prepared to make changes to things yourself. If that is not possible, find someone else to do it for you.
- Make sure to hand your paperwork in on time. If you do not you will not be able to have your recital.
- Use writing your biography as a template for future biographies.
- Create a poster which will accurately highlight what you want for your recital.
- Advertise on social media sites. It will broaden your viewing scope and alert more people about your recital.
- Try personalizing your invitations. You can solidify a few individuals who would be at your recital.
- Start planning early. Lost time can mean lost opportunities to advertise.

### **Rehearsals on location**

We scheduled rehearsals with the Howard Performing Arts Center after passing my recital audition. Most music students are given three hours of rehearsal time while students with piano recital are given four hours due to their instrument being at the hall. These three hours are crucial to the success of your recital. During this time it is important to work on the sound you want to hear by setting the acoustic curtains and finding the ideal arrangement for the piano. It is also important

to determine stage entrances and exits, fix specifics in songs, and achieve an overall acclimation to the space. It is important to feel comfortable in the space so that your best voice can go forward. Using your practice time wisely can make for a successful recital.

For my rehearsal time we decided to get through half of my set which consisted of 6 songs. We were able to get through seven songs, even with the time that we stopped for critique. I wore the heels I planned on wearing to the recital to see if I could sing comfortably and supported in them. During this time it was decided that I needed to work on my interaction with the text more. In the second rehearsal we went through the final five songs of my set and I was given more critique. The final rehearsal I wore my dress and heels and practiced the entrances and exits that I would do on the day of the recital. We planned what we set out to do before the rehearsals began so that I could be prepared to do it. Also, after every rehearsal we spoke about what would be done in the next one. This schedule allowed us to get through everything that needed to be covered without wasting time.

### **Tips:**

- Decide what will be done during the rehearsals *before* the rehearsals. It is easy to waste time without a plan.
- Work on the issues highlighted in each rehearsal.
- Focus on being in the space and feeling it out.
- Trust what you have learned and what you hear.

### **Recital Plans**

I began searching for what I wanted to wear fairly early on. There was one day where I just sat down and started searching for what I wanted to wear. I knew that I wanted to express an ephemeral feeling that would match the smooth feeling of the music so I chose a dress based on that. I believe that the dress adds to the story that the music aims to tell. If the clothing is a distraction the

message may be lost. I wanted it to be long and flowing, which would be the graceful look I desired. Taking the time out to search thoroughly I looked for over two hours until I found something that I thought was appropriate but was also within my price range.

The reception is something that is optional in the recital preparation process. If you choose to have one it would be of your own volition. I chose to have a reception because I wanted the full experience. My recital theme influenced the decisions I made in regards to food. Since I wanted to create cohesion between the various aspects of the recital I chose finger food that was French in nature. This gave me the cohesion I desired.

**Tips:**

- Look for clothing early.
- Work within your price range.
- Create a cohesive theme between all aspects of your recital.



### ***Reflecting – The Home Stretch***

Your recital is complete. Congratulations! Though the biggest part of your research is over you are not finished yet. Reflection, a crucial part of your recital, will conclude the process.

Reflection is important because reflecting on past performances gives you better ideas to have better performances. Self-evaluation gives encouragement and will help cultivate better performances in the future.

### **Performance Evaluation**

During the time after the recital you should be prepared to ask yourself some serious questions. This is the time where you sit and assess what happened during your recital. It may happen the day after, a few weeks after or a month after depending on the urgency and how you feel about it. You can listen to or watch a recording of the recital. During this time it is appropriate to ask yourself what you did wrong, what you did well and in what ways you could improve for the next time. These three questions provide the basis for self-analysis and will help you build your performance skills in the future.

I chose to evaluate myself by listening to the audio recording of the recital twice and watching the video recording once. My first listen through was to desensitize my ears to the recital and to get an overall grasp on the progression of the quality of the recital. The second listen was in order for me to home in to the specifics in the music. I sought to hear if I expressed the emotions I wanted to in the music. The video recording was for me to take notes on posture and stage presence.

This is the final analysis chart I used after my recital to evaluate myself. The categories are each things that I sought to do well. Technical advancements include using the techniques I have been taught properly. Artistic interpretation asks if the artistic message I sought to portray came off well. Linguistic proficiency includes my pronunciation of the words as well as my phrasing of the text. Presentation success deals with accomplishments in how I presented my recital from what I

wore to how the reception was set up. Preparation and organization challenges me to question my sensitivity to time and my ability to adequately prepare every aspect of my recital. Publicity results checks if the efforts I made toward advertisement were fruitful and drew the crowd I expected.

Final Analysis					
	1-Unsuccessful	2 - Somewhat Unsuccessful	3 - Neutral	4 - Somewhat successful	5 - Successful
Technical Advancements					X
Artistic Interpretation				X	
Linguistic Proficiency				X	
Presentation Success					X
Preparation and Organization			X		
Publicity Results				X	

This is what my final analysis chart looks like. Here's why I chose what I have. I spent the most amount of time on the technical portions of the recital and I believe it showed. The sheer amount of effort that I put in to learning the music allows me to classify it as successful. My artistic interpretation suffered a little because of how late in the process I began it. Tied in with my linguistic proficiency I struggled to get them to the level that I wanted with the amount of time I left myself. I do believe that the presentation was a success. I spent the time searching for what I wanted to wear to create an atmosphere. Both that and the reception, I felt, were successful in their presentation. My preparation and organization were time challenged, but I was aided by family and friends when it came time for the recital. I labeled it neutral because I felt as if many of the things I was required to do were happening last minute. The publicity was the thing that the least amount of time was spent on but was done in such a way that the timing did not affect the turnout.

## Process Reflections

I asked some classmates these questions to develop a well-rounded analysis for the project.

### Initial process

- How did you begin your process of learning the music?
- When did you decide to start planning for your recital?
- Was there a specific theme you wanted to go for with your songs?
- What was your rationale for choosing your songs? – Include if you chose to do songs you learned at an earlier time and why you made the decisions you did?
- How did you schedule your practice time? Were you consistent?
- What are some of the biggest challenges when it comes to practicing that you find you have as a student?
- How does practicing affect your performance? –negatively and positively
- What do you do in your practice time?
- How do you organize your practice time?
- How do you record what you need to practice more on or improvements you've made while in the practice room?
- What is your process for learning music? Is there a specific order in which you learn notes, rhythm, and text?

### Accompanist

- How did you choose your accompanist? (What procedure did you follow in looking for an accompanist?)
- When did you speak about prices?
- When did you give your accompanist the music?



- How many times did you practice with your accompanist out of lesson time?
- What did you have prepared before you met with them?
- What was your relationship like with your accompanist and how do you feel that a relationship between performer and accompanist affects the overall performance?

#### Technical issues

- How long does it usually take you to learn the music for a piece?
- Are there any tips or tricks you have that can help persons completely learn their pieces? (for example - My tip is to perform as much as possible when trying to learn a piece)
- How to you memorize the words?
- Anything to say about different ways to learn text?

#### Language

- How do you learn the language?
- What is your process for expressing the language?
- Any tips for learning and understanding the meaning of the text?

#### Promotion

- Was there a specific formula to how you went about this?
- How did you choose the person to do your poster?
- Were you strategic in how you decided to go about advertising for your recital?
- On what forms of social media did you let people know about it?

#### After the recital

- What was your expected turnout and how was the turnout?
- What did you feel that you did particularly well?
- What do you feel that you could have done better?

- Anything to improve on for your next performance?

## Recording

Recording my thoughts and ideas in journal form allows an active engagement in the learning process. When journaling I write about what was done for the day in addition to what I felt. Feelings can affect practice so when you know why you practiced or performed the way you did you can prepare for the future. Not limiting myself to writing I make sure to record myself every time I am in the practice room. Actively asking myself what I am doing or what I can improve gives me confidence and helps me fix mistakes quicker. Here is a chart from March 6, 2015 that I used to document my song process during the semester.

Song List Progress							
Composer	Songs	Notes	Rhythms	Words	Translation	Interpretation	Performed
Gabriel Faure	Automne	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Mandoline	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Notre amour	X	X	X	X		X
	Après un rêve	X	X	X	X		X
Reynaldo Hahn	D'une prison	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Fêtes galantes	X	X	X	X		X
	Si mes vers avaient	X	X	X	X	X	X
Henri Duparc	Chanson triste	X	X	X	X	X	X
	La vie antérieure	X	X	X	X		X
	Lamento		X	X	X		
Edith Piaf	Non, Je ne regrette rien	X	X	X	X		
	La vie en rose	X	X	X	X	X	X



## Conclusion

The research has shown that it is possible for a student to handle academics, extra-curricular activities and a recital. It simply requires an adequate amount of effort and planning. Lack of planning is a leading cause in recital failure and feelings of discontent. This not only entails starting the process early, but also means working efficiently. A student who works efficiently does better than one who starts early but fails to plan for their success. Students should know that the practices they keep are indicators of their future work ethic. Good habits should be cultivated early and provide the basis for those searching for successful careers in music.

This project's strength lies in the close connection to what many music students studying at Andrews want to do after they leave college, its vulnerability regarding the effort required for a recital, and the willingness to leave a trail for other students to follow. Weaknesses dealt mostly with time constraint, constantly finding out new information, and the uncertainty in when the full research would be complete. Due to the nature of this project, it was nearly impossible to know when data collection would be complete, especially because I was going through the process as I was writing about it. Also, my delay in starting the project added to the stress of doing a recital in the last semester of my senior year. An earlier start would have led to a more complete plan. Therefore, if you are an honors student and wish to use your recital for research, I recommend starting the planning process a full two years in advance.

School activities can also cause a considerable amount of strain and take away precious time from the recital. I upheld a commitment I had to the AU Theater Wing on campus, and it placed a great deal of stress on me. I would not change it for the experience I had, but others may not be able to handle time consuming commitments. Students should know how they operate in order to gauge what activities may be detrimental to their recital's success.

A student conducting follow up research could look in to the issue of recital structure and the long term process. Although this project was born out of the need for structure in the way recitals are handled by students and teachers alike it does not cover how this could be done. It is important to have an earlier focus on the recital from the first year as a music student. Teachers would be able to use newer research to better focus their student from the first lesson to the last and be able to move them in the right direction. I do believe, however, that actual preparation should begin two years prior to the recital. Although this project does not offer this curriculum for teachers to follow, it still acts as a great resource for teachers to understand the academic struggle of students in order to offer healthy solutions.



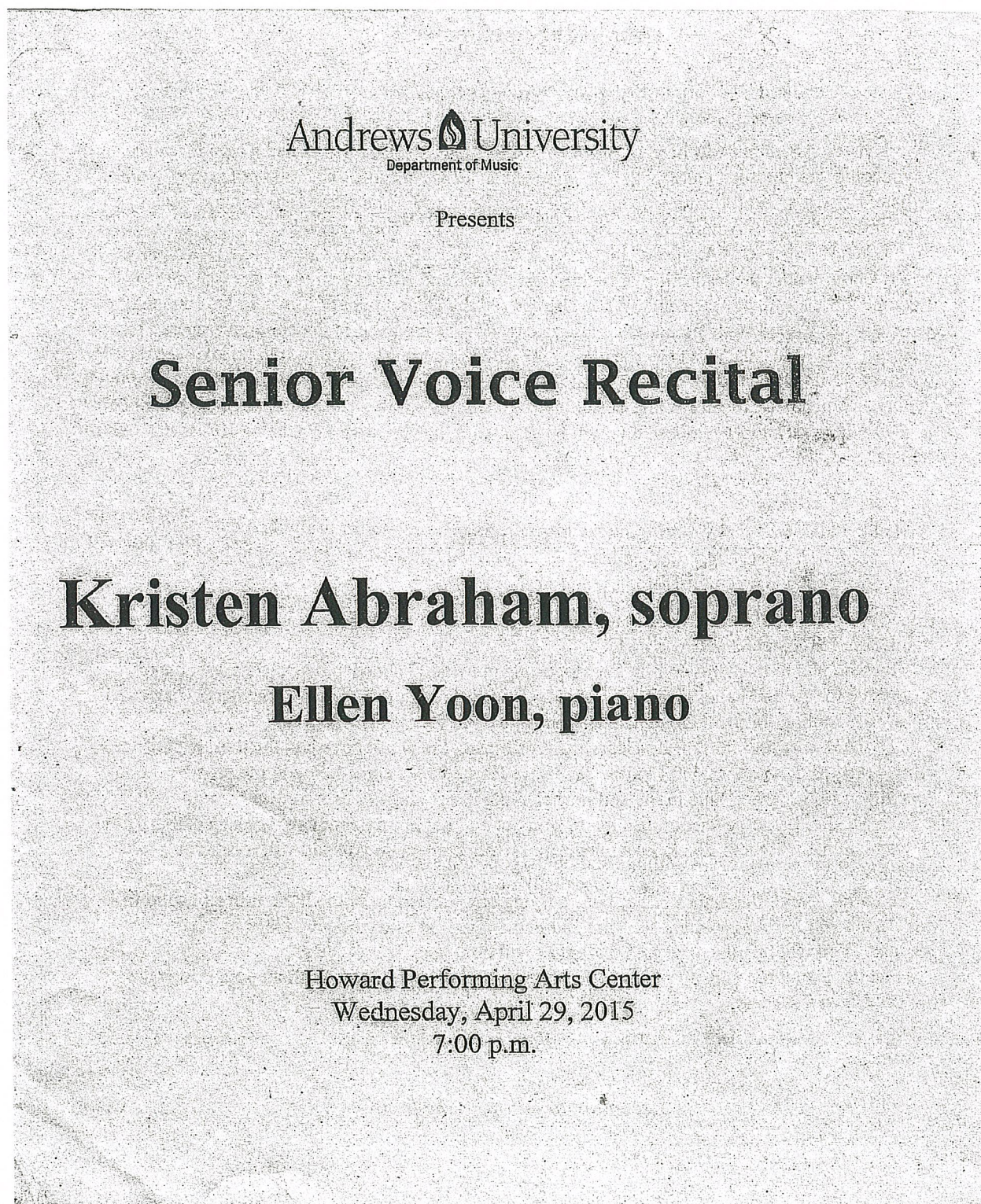
**Illustrations**

Figure 1.



### About the performer

**Kristen Abraham** was born in Brooklyn, New York. She has always had a love for music, even composing her first piece with a notation she made up because she could not read or write music. Kristen's first formal music experience happened when she was a senior in high school. Under the tutelage of Antonie Brady, she learned how to read and write music.

When she arrived at Andrews University, Kristen quickly joined I Cantori and Deliverance Mass Choir. Under the leadership of both Stephen Zork and Adrian Langdon, she was able to become more aware of her talents. When she entered the Department of Music in her sophomore year, Kristen started studying under Charles Reid and was involved in the children's opera "The Bremen Town Musicians" where she played the cat. She currently continues to be involved on campus, putting her creative skills to good use. This year, she became the costume director for the Andrews University Theatre Wing, designing the costumes for two productions: *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Pygmalion*. She will be graduating in May with a Bachelor of Arts in Music.

### Thanks

I want to thank God first for bringing me to Andrews and second for bringing me to the music program. I did not start out as a music major, but God knew where I needed to be. I want to thank Him for His guidance in my life.

I would like to thank my family for supporting me when I chose to become a music major. Your love for me and belief in me has helped me push through to finish my time here. Thank you for always rooting for me. I appreciate all you have done for me. Thank you.

To the faculty and staff of the Department of Music, I may not have had the most experience when I arrived at Andrews, but I know that I have learned a lot while being in the program. Thank you for investing time in me and for believing in my abilities as a student.

To Mr. Reid, you've encouraged me to sing out and not be shy about my voice. You have truly taught me what it means to be a musician. I really appreciate you and will miss your guidance.

To Mrs. Averil, this semester has been a trying one, especially with all the forms I had to fill out. Thank you for being patient with me and helping me get everything together so I can graduate. You will be missed at Andrews and I will miss you.

Finally, I want to thank all of you who came to this recital tonight. Without you, this would not have been a success.

*Reception to follow in the lobby*

Figure 2.



## PROGRAM

Mandoline  
Notre amour  
Après un rêve  
Automne

Gabriel Fauré  
(1845-1924)

Chanson triste  
La vie antérieure  
Lamento

Henri Duparc  
(1848-1933)

D'une prison  
Si mes vers avaient  
Fêtes galantes

Reynaldo Hahn  
(1875-1947)

Non, je ne regrette rien  
La vie en rose

Edith Piaf  
(1915-1963)

*This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Music*

Figure 3.



## Translations

### Mandoline (Paul Verlaine)

The serenaders and their beautiful listeners  
Exchange sweet nothings  
Under the singing branches.

It is Tircis and Aminte and the tiresome  
Clitandre and Damis, who for many a cruel  
Woman writes many a tender verse.

Their short silk jackets,  
Their long trailing dresses, their elegance,  
Their joy, and their soft blue shadows

Whirl in ecstasy of a moon,  
Pink and gray and the mandolin chatters  
Amid the shivering breeze.

### Notre amour (Armand Silvestre)

Our love is a light thing,  
Like the fragrance the wind  
Takes from the tips of the ferns  
For us to breathe in and dream.

Our love is an enchanting thing  
Like the songs of the morning  
Where no sorrow is voiced  
And an uncertain hope thrills.

Our love is a sacred thing  
Like the mysteries of the woods  
Where an unknown soul quivers,  
Where silences speak.

Our love is an infinite thing  
Like the paths of sunsets  
Where the sea joined again with the sky  
Falls asleep under the setting suns.

Our love is an eternal thing  
Like everything a conquering god  
Has touched with the fire of his wing  
Like all that comes from the heart.

### Après un rêve (Romain Bussine)

In a sleep made sweet by a vision of you  
I dreamed of happiness, a passionate illusion  
Your eyes were tender, your voice pure and ringing.  
You were as radiant as a sky lit by the dawn.

You called me and I left the earth  
To escape with you towards the light.  
The heavens parted their clouds for us  
Splendors unknown, flashes of divine light . . .

Alas, Alas! Sad awakening from dreams!  
I call to you, O night. Give me back your illusions,  
Return, return, in radiance  
Return, O mysterious night.

### Automne (Armand Silvestre)

Autumn of misty skies and heart-rending horizons  
Of fleeting sunsets and pale dawns  
I watch your melancholy days flow by like a torrent

My thoughts carried away on the wings of regret,  
(as if it were possible for our time to be relived)  
Dreamily wander over enchanted hillsides  
Where the days of my youth once smiled.

I feel the bright sunlight of victorious memory,  
The fallen roses blooming once more in bouquets,  
Tears well up in my eyes, which in my heart,  
At twenty had already been forgotten.

### Chanson triste (Jean Lahor)

In your heart sleeps moonlight  
A gentle summer moonlight.  
And to escape the stress of life,  
I will drown myself in your light.

I will forget past sorrows,  
my love, as you cradle  
my sad heart and thoughts  
in the loving peacefulness of your arms.

Figure 4.



You will take my aching head  
Oh!, sometimes on your knee  
And will tell it a ballade  
That seems to speak of us.

And from our eyes full of sorrow,  
From your eyes I will drink  
So many kisses and so much tenderness  
That, perhaps, I will heal.

La vie antérieure (Charles Baudelaire)

For a long time I lived under immense porticoes  
Which the suns of the sea died with a thousand rays  
And whose great columns, erect and majestic  
At evening, made them look like basalt caves.

The rolling waves, mirroring the image of the skies  
Solemnly and majestically mingled  
The all-powerful chords of their rich music  
Colored like the sunset reflected in my eyes. 'It is  
there I lived in calm, sensual pleasure  
In the midst of azure skies, the waves, the wonders  
And nude slaves, lavishly perfumed

Who refreshed my brow with palm leaves  
And whose only care was to deepen  
The agonizing secret that made me suffer.

Lamento (Pierre-Jules-Théophile Gautier)

Do you know the white tomb  
Where floats with plaintive sound,  
The shadow of a yew tree?  
On the yew a pale dove  
Sad and alone in the setting sun sings its song.  
One would say the awakened soul  
Weeps, under the earth, in unison with the song  
And from the distress of being forgotten  
Moans in cooing sounds very softly.  
Ah! Never again near the tomb  
Will I go when night falls in its dark cloak  
To hear the pale dove sing  
On the branch of the yew tree its plaintive song.

D'une prison (Paul Verlaine)

The sky above the roof is so blue, so calm  
A tree above the roof gently rocks its branches  
The bell I see in the sky softly rings  
The bird I see on the tree plaintively sings  
My Lord, My Lord!  
The life there is so simple and serene.  
This peaceful rumble comes from the town  
What have you done, oh you,  
who weeps without end,  
Say, what have you done with your youth?

Si mes vers avaient (Victor Hugo)

My verses would flee, soft and frail,  
To your garden so beautiful  
If my verses had wings like a bird.

They would fly, like sparks,  
To your cheery fireside  
If my verses had wings like the mind.

Close to you, pure and faithful,  
They would run, night and day,  
If my verses had wings like love.

Fêtes galantes (Paul Verlaine)

The serenaders and their beautiful listeners  
Exchange sweet nothings  
Under the singing branches.

It is Tircis and Aminte and the tiresome Clitandre and  
Damis, who for many a cruel  
Woman writes many a tender verse.

Their short silk jackets,  
Their long trailing dresses, their elegance,  
Their joy, and their soft blue shadows

Whirl in ecstasy of a moon,  
Pink and gray and the mandolin chatters  
Amid the shivering breeze.

Figure 5.



Non, Je ne regrette rien (Michel Vaucaire)

I don't regret anything that has happened  
in my life when it comes to love.  
My new life, love, and joys begin today with you.

No, nothing at all  
No, I don't regret anything  
Not the good that has been done to me  
Nor the bad, it's all the same to me.

It's paid for, swept away, forgotten  
I don't care about the past  
With all my memories

I lit up the fire  
My sorrows, my pleasures.  
I don't need them anymore.  
Swept away are the loves  
With all their trembling  
Swept away forever.  
I go back to the beginning.

Because my life, because my joys today  
Begin with you!

La vie en rose (Edith Piaf)

With eyes that make mine lower  
A smile that is lost on his lips  
That is the untouched portrait  
Of the man to whom I belong

When he takes me in his arms,  
He whispers softly to me,  
I see life colored rose.

He tells me words of love,  
Words of everyday  
And that does something to me.

He has entered in my heart  
A part of happiness.  
I now know the cause

It's him for me, me for him in life  
He said that to me and promised me "forever."

And as soon as I see him  
I feel within me my heart that beats.

Figure 6.



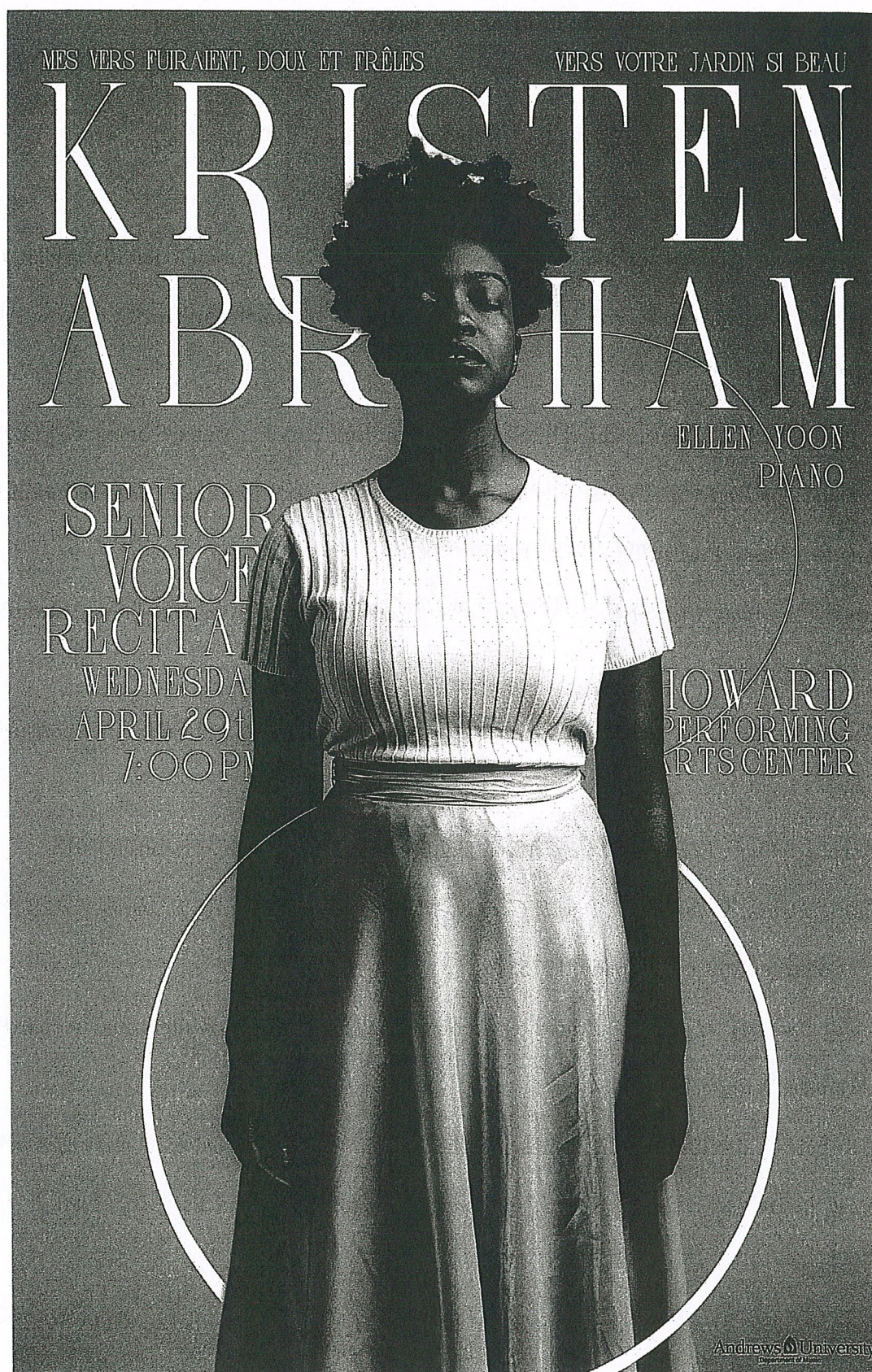


Figure 7. Martin, Joshua Kendell, 2015, poster, height approximately 17 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" X 11 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>"



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